



Don't forget your pets when planning ahead

NSW Trustee & Guardian

We all know how important it is to be prepared for the unexpected in life. Some of us sensibly plan for someone else to make decisions on our behalf about money, health and lifestyle matters just in case we can't do this for ourselves. But what happens to our beloved pets in these situations?

Planning ahead documents including a Will, Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship can include specific instructions which will give direction about access to your pets and the use of your money to provide for them if for some reason you are unable to care for them.

What happens to my pets if I become incapacitated and can't make my own decisions?

By making an Enduring Power of Attorney and an Enduring Guardianship appointment, the people you nominate can make decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to due to illness, an accident or incapacity. Both of these documents together can be used to ensure your appointed representatives know what you want for your pets. For example your attorney can make decisions about your finances and assets, including money to be spent on your pets. Importantly, your attorney has the authority to enter your property if you are ill or incapacitated to gain access to your pets. Your Enduring Guardian can make health, medical and lifestyle decisions; including what services may be required to adequately care for your pets.

You may want to document and discuss with your attorney and guardian what you would like to happen to your pets if you had to go into hospital or permanent care.

What happens to my pets if I meet with a sudden accident or after I die?

The short term issue is, if you died unexpectedly, would anyone know you have a pet in your house in need of food, water and attention?

To minimise this risk, it is important to inform family, friends, neighbours and even work colleagues what to do about your pet in case of an emergency. It may be up to one or several of these people to do something while your executor is contacted.

NSW Trustee & Guardian have extensive experience in considering the options around such issues. They can provide you with the time, support and advice to work through your options.

If you have not made an Enduring Power of Attorney, appointed an Enduring Guardian or made a Will that considers your pets, then it is important to see a professional. Make an appointment to see a solicitor, a trustee company or NSW Trustee and Guardian as soon as possible for the sake of your beloved pet.

Free guide to pets and your Will

You can order your free copy of *What about me? Your pets and your Will* by emailing tagequiries@tag.nsw.gov.au or call NSW Trustee & Guardian on (02) 9240 0775.

RSPCA

RSPCA NSW also asks: What would happen if you were suddenly unable to look after your pet? If you fell ill without notice and were unable to let someone know your pet was at home? Who would make sure your loved one was taken care of?

To ensure this doesn't happen to you, you can download a free card from RSPCA's website www.rspcansw.org.au. It says:

I'm a pet owner.

Help make sure my pet is okay

Please contact the person below and let them know where I am or if I am unable to care for them at this time:

Name:

Phone:

Thank you for looking after my pet!

Simply print it, fill it out with the details of someone authorities can contact in case of emergency and put it in your wallet so that it's kept with you at all times.

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